



UNITED - Inclusion and Diversity of Learners with Diverse Backgrounds

No: 2022-2-DE02-KA210-VET-000092335

Unveiling Insights: An In-Depth Analysis of Survey Responses



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Introduction

The United project puts great emphasis on fostering and facilitating learning about the concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion. In this regard, alongside with the development and implementation of training modules, a high priority was given to quality assurance, which, in turn, was conceptualized in two complementary ways:

First, the process of learning should be assessed: Did provided materials meet the expectation of participants and trainers? Were participants able to actively engage with the content covered? Was peer learning among participants adequately facilitated during the program?

Secondly, the outcome of the activities should be evaluated: Did the program bring about a deeper understanding of the key concepts covered? Did participants feel enabled to practically apply the content learned? Were the challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion, which participants may face in their daily routines and interactions at their workplaces, adequately addressed?

Both these components are vital for the project in terms of the commitment to offer continuous training opportunities on these very important topics as they serve the purposes of monitoring the learning process and evaluating the program's impact (see ILO, 2015). Build on data gathered and information derived in these processes, learnings may be derived and applied in iterations of the program (see Gadkari, 2023).

In recognition of this quality assurance approach, it was decided to establish a survey which was designed to address both dimension, the process and the outcome of the training. This section of the project report will explain this tool as well as key results and learnings derived from that.

Survey

A standardized online questionnaire was shared with all participants and facilitators of training modules. The survey could be found here: <https://forms.gle/3FcLhGhS1GjvgbW27>

It included items on the quality on the program content and delivery as well as on the perceived outcomes and effects (see United, 2023). In that sense, survey items did not single out certain modules and asked specific questions about these, but rather focused on transversal issues such as comprehension, activity and applicability of the modules.

Survey design followed the Kirkpatrick model which suggests that assessment of training programs on behalf of participants should address four levels: reaction, learning, behavior, results (see Kirkpatrick Partners, 2023). Most items were Likert-scaled, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, and in addition participants were also given the option to provide further feedback and comments in form of written text.

The results and insights presented refer to data gathered during the summer term 2023, ranging from April 1 to September 30, 2023. In this timeframe both project partners, Luxembourg Creative Lab and XU Exponential University conducted workshops and accompanying activities reaching a total of 211 participants.

Out of this grand total, 58 participants, or 27.5%, filled in the questionnaire. Given that participation in the survey was optional and that non-participation would not have any kind of effect on behalf of the participant, this response rate was perceived quite positively.

Among the respondents of the survey, three sub-groups can be identified:

- 24 students
- 15 trainers¹
- 19 administrative staff

Since the survey was applied in different activities such as workshops facilitated by Luxembourg Creative Lab and seminars offered as part of curricular teaching at XU Exponential University, it should be mentioned here that the recruitment of participants was mixed. In the case of lab workshops attendance was voluntary whereas in the case of university seminars it was mandatory (although not strictly enforced and students had the chance to opt out). Of course, this only applied to the presence of people in the activities, not to submitting the evaluation survey. The latter was completely optional for all.

Yet still, it is worthwhile to reflect on under which premises potential respondents were recruited. It is well known that participation in evaluations as well as in other such activities is prone to study bias (see Popovic and Huecker, 2023). Certain segments of the overall population might be more likely to take part than others, leading to overrepresentation of certain groups and underrepresentation of others. This might even go along with a respective overrepresentation of certain views since, for example, among those self-selected participants of the survey confirmation bias might be at play (see Ethics Unwrapped, 2023).

While such underlying dynamics are difficult to unpack and even more difficult to mitigate, it seems important to address this and create awareness for any potential biases. This certainly holds true even though there is no evidence that the survey data gathered might be biased in any way. After all, the United project is all about equal representation and equal participation, which is why it feels extra important to shed light on the possibility of potential distortion within the information derived.

Results

Overall, the response to the United training program among participants was very positive. The first item on the survey, which was supposed to capture an overall impression before looking into different aspects, read as follows: “How would you rate the overall content quality and relevance of the blended training program ‘Inclusion and Diversity’, produced by the Erasmus+ co-funded project ‘United – Inclusion and Diversity of Learners with Diverse Backgrounds’, (Pr. No: 2022-2-DE02-KA210-VET-000092335)?”

Response to this item was an average 4.91 in the aforementioned Likert scale ranging from 1 = worst to 5 = best. In addition to the positive total, all three subgroups – students, instructors, administrative staff – had very similar scores, ranging from 4.87 (trainers) to 4.95 (students), which indicates an even distribution of the overall very positive feedback.

¹ This sub-group includes professors, instructors and freelancers.

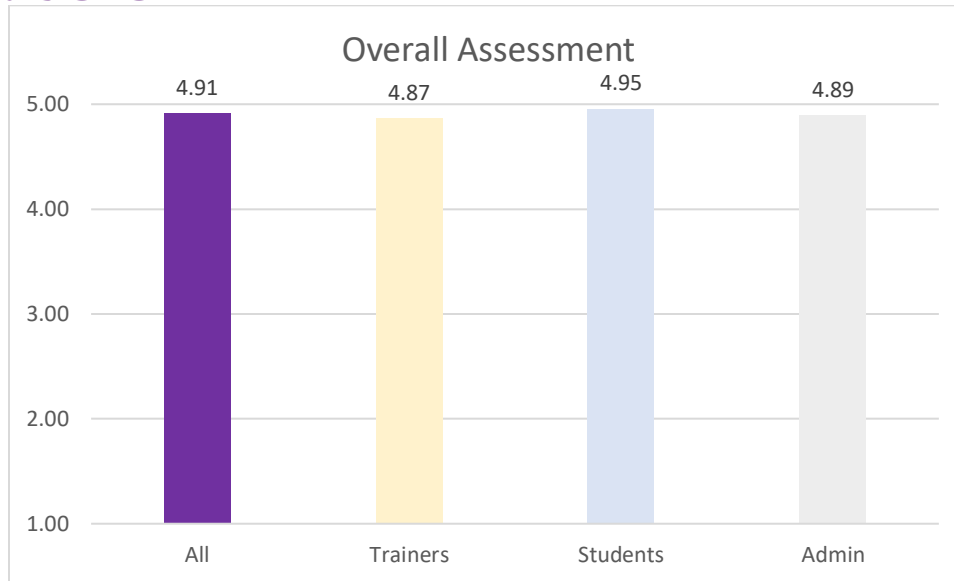


Figure 1: “How would you rate the overall content quality and relevance of the blended training program ‘Inclusion and Diversity’” (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

In addition to this, some light shall be shed on particular items which encapsulate the purpose and scope of the training program.

1.1 Understanding

The survey aimed to assess if the program enhanced understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts. This is crucial since, in view of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives, understanding is an essential step and lays the foundation for application (see Armstrong 2010). Putting participants in a position to apply the knowledge acquired throughout the program is one of the key objectives of the program overall.

The item read ”Overall, I found the blended training program 'Inclusion and Diversity' to be effective in enhancing my understanding of inclusion and diversity concepts.” Responses were very positive overall (average score: 4.91), and also here there was only little to moderate deviation among sub-groups, ranging from 4.84 (admin) to 5.00 (students)

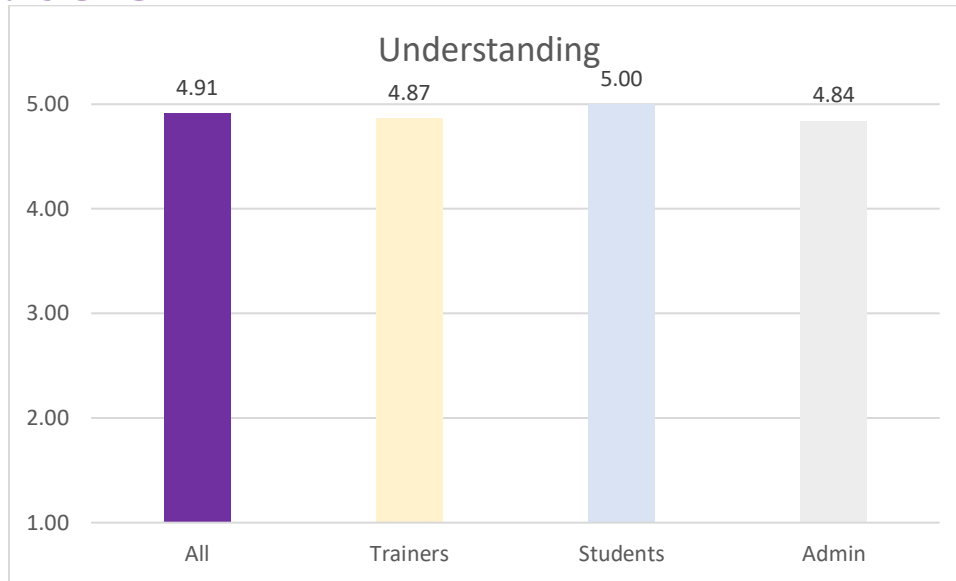


Figure 2: “Overall, I found the blended training program 'Inclusion and Diversity' to be effective in enhancing my understanding of inclusion and diversity concepts.” (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

1.2 Adequacy

This item asked respondents to rate if challenges and opportunities related to diversity, equity and inclusion were adequately addressed throughout the program. This is of great importance to the project since it is certainly acknowledged that, when it comes to the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion, there is no single all-encompassing source of truth. Rather, it is an explicit aim of the program to also get feedback from participants on which aspects may have been missed, or were not dealt with adequately. This is certainly supported by other measures such as focus group interviews, but should also be addressed in the evaluation survey.

Here, while results were still positive after all (average score: 4.86), the distribution between sub-groups was more spread. While students seemed very content (5.00), trainers (4.73) and administrative staff (4.79) indicated that there may be further perspectives on diversity, equity and inclusion topics that deserve attention.

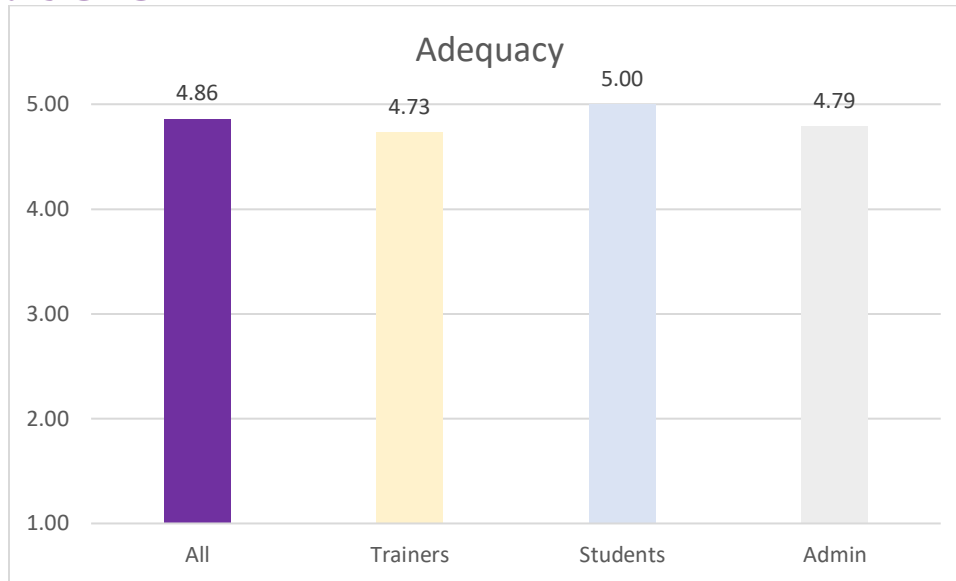


Figure 3: "The training program adequately addressed the challenges and opportunities related to fostering inclusion and diversity." (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

1.3 Peer learning

As the United training program aims to foster interaction and learning among participants, it is key to assess if group discussions and exchanges within the program had a positive impact on everybody's learning experience. If well designed and integrated in the program curriculum, interactions with peers may present new perspectives and important learning opportunities for participants and facilitators alike.

Looking at responses, the picture is again a bit mixed, albeit overall assessment is positive once again (average score: 4.90). Students rated peer learning components highly (5.00) whereas trainers (4.73) saw room for improvement. Further analysis and perhaps interviews might help to better understand the causes for this.

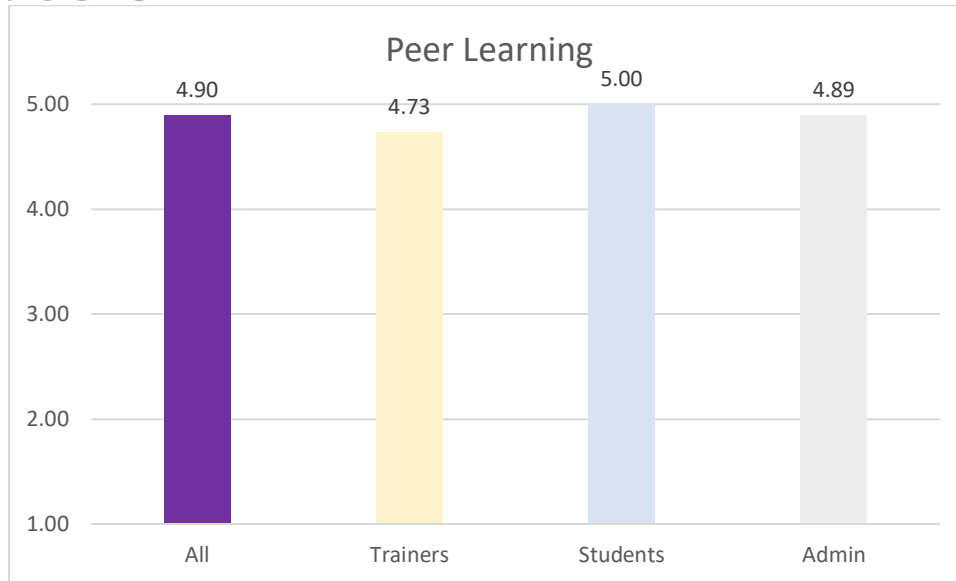


Figure 4: "The opportunities for group discussions and sharing of insights positively contributed to my learning experience." (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

1.4 Application

The overall learning process connected to the United program is supposed to lead from understanding the concepts to testing them through in-class interactions to applying them in everyday life. In that sense, the item which asks if participants feel confident to apply the knowledge gained is of utmost importance. This refers to personal growth as well as to very concrete societal implications as participants would be able to actively support all members of their communities.

Along with an overall positive result (average score: 4.88), on this item all target groups feel equipped to tackle practical situations related to diversity, equity and inclusion, with moderate deviations among sub-groups. Students again show the highest score (4.96) whereas trainers (4.80) and administrative staff (4.84) seem to allude to the benefits of further training or other accompanying measures.

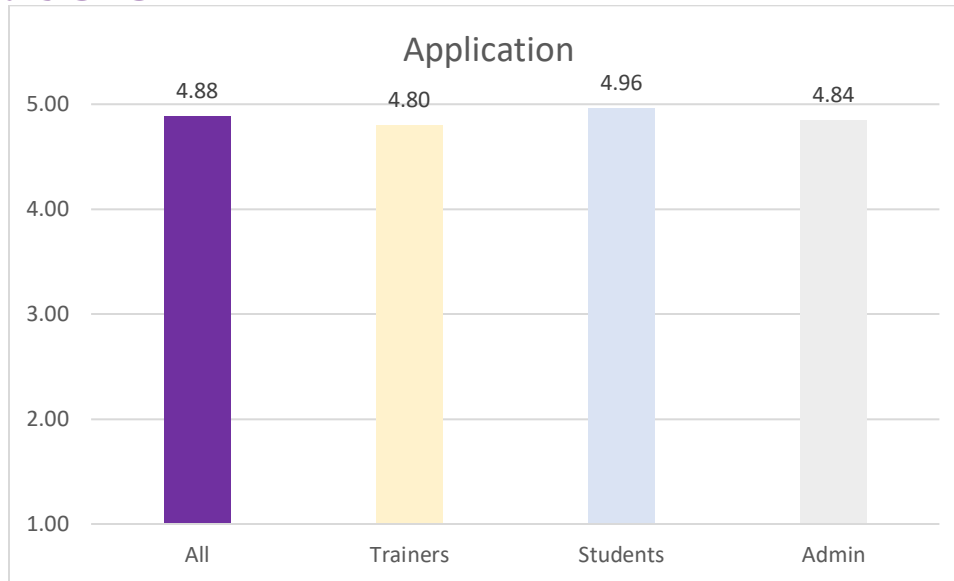


Figure 5: "I feel confident in applying the knowledge gained from the training program to practical situations involving inclusion and diversity." (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

Reflection and Implementation

As stated above, it is a key objective of the program to generate impact. In that sense, following the assessment, certain interventions may be agreed in order to refine the learning journey and, eventually, further increase its impact (see Changemethod 2023).

Survey results showed at least moderate deviations among sub-groups, which is why each of them might benefit from measures tailored to their dispositions and needs. In that sense, main findings and recommendations for each sub-group are listed below:

- Students rated the training very positively. Thus, it seems recommendable to have workshops built on the United modules early on during their studies. This might support a sense of feeling welcome, a sense of belonging and, with regard to the application of learnings, a sense of self-efficacy. All this may contribute very positively to both a student's study experience and her:his personal development.
- Trainers also assessed the program positively. That said, looking at items such as adequate coverage of issues and facilitation of peer learning, they still saw some room of improvement and seemed to point out that input based on real-life training experiences may further refine the application of the United curriculum. In that sense, recommendations derived from the feedback include that materials and further training opportunities should be provided and spaces to share insights should be offered.
- Administrative staff joined the other sub-groups in giving the program a positive overall assessment. Most notably, they alluded to further perspectives on diversity, equity and inclusion which could be addressed. According to that, it seems recommendable to facilitate recurring opportunities for all staff members to share, reflect and learn from each other.

All in all, the United training program was received very positively throughout its initial cycle in summer term 2023. Detailed survey results show some room for improvement, which will be inquired further. Essentially, evidence shows that institutionalizing such a training program seems highly recommended.

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